

[DR Congo: Two UN 'blue helmets' killed in attack in North Kivu](#)

9 October 2017 – Two United Nations peacekeepers have been killed and several injured in an attack on their base in North Kivu, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), a UN spokesperson said.

“The injured peacekeepers have been evacuated to Goma for medical assistance,” said spokesperson Stéphane Dujarric at the regular news briefing at UN Headquarters, in New York.

The attack was carried out this morning (local time) by suspected Allied Democratic Forces in Mamundioma, some 1,700 kilometres east of the capital, Kinshasa.

According to the UN Spokesperson, the Organization’s Stabilization Mission in the DRC (known by its French acronym, MONUSCO) has deployed attack helicopters as well as the Force Intervention Brigade in support of operations and to reinforce its presence.

It also deployed forces on the road between Kamango and Mbau to restore order and protect the populations of these towns.

Mamundioma was also the site of an attack on UN peacekeepers last month in which one UN peacekeeper from Tanzania was killed and another injured.

[Rural areas have potential to feed and employ 'younger, more crowded planet' – UN report](#)

9 October 2017 – Long seen as poverty traps, rural areas are in fact key to economic growth in developing countries when pegged to food production, according to a new United Nations agriculture agency report released Monday.

With ‘sweeping transformations’ that can unlock the potential of rural areas to help feed and employ a younger, more crowded planet, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) report [State of Food and Agriculture 2017](#) argues that millions of youth in developing countries who are poised to enter the labour force in the coming decades need not flee rural areas to escape poverty.

The overarching conclusion of this report is that fulfilling the [2030](#)

[Agenda](#) depends crucially on progress in rural areas, which is where most of the poor and hungry live,” said FAO Director-General José Graziano da Silva, in his foreword to the report.

The report says that between 2015 and 2030, people aged 15-24 are expected to rise to 1.3 billion, with the lion's share being in rural zones. However, it continues, lagging growth in the industrial and service sectors in many developing countries will not be able to absorb the massive numbers of new job seekers – nor will agriculture in its current form.

Rural people who relocate to cities will likely run a greater risk of becoming part of the urban poor, instead of finding a pathway out of poverty. Others will need to look for employment elsewhere, leading to seasonal, or permanent migration.

According to the report, targeting policy support and investment to rural areas to build food systems and agro-industries connected to urban zones – especially small and medium size cities – represents a strategic intervention to create employment that would allow more people to stay, and thrive, in the countryside.

“Too often ignored by policy-makers and planners, territorial networks of small cities and towns are [important reference points for rural people](#) – the places where they buy their seed, send their children to school and access medical care and other services,” noted Mr. da Silva.

“Policy-makers are urged to recognize the catalytic role of small cities and towns in mediating the rural-urban nexus and providing smallholder farmers with greater opportunities to market their produce and share in the benefits of economic growth,” he added.

The report underscores that transformed rural economies won't necessarily be a panacea that solves all the pressures that drive people to relocate, but they will generate much-needed jobs and contribute to making out-migration more of a choice, rather than a necessity.

While urbanization provides a golden opportunity for agriculture, it also presents challenges for millions of small-scale family farmers, the report stated.

As more profitable markets may lead to value chains dominated by large processors and retailers – to the exclusion of smallholders – supportive public policies and investments must be hard-wired into policies to harness urban demand as an engine for transformative and equitable growth, ensuring market participation by small-scale, family-farmers.

The study lays out three lines for action:

- Put in place a range of policies designed to ensure that small-scale producers participate fully in meeting urban food demands;
- Build up the infrastructure to connect rural areas and urban markets, including rural roads, electrical power grids, storage facilities and refrigerated transportation systems; and

- Including not just mega-cities into well-connected rural-urban economies but knitting in smaller, more spread-out urban areas as well.

[UNICEF warns of nutrition crisis affecting 165,000 children in Mali](#)

9 October 2017 – A nutrition crisis, exacerbated by continuing violence, instability and displacement, is threatening the lives and futures of thousands of children in Mali, the United Nations Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)) warned today.

A report published today shows that an estimated 165,000 children are expected to suffer from severe acute malnutrition across the country in 2018.

“Behind [these figures](#) are the lives of the most vulnerable and forgotten girls and boys in Mali,” said UNICEF Representative Lucia Elmi in a press release.

“We must provide life-saving treatment and ensure each and every one of these children can fully recover. At the same time, we need to invest in the critical first 1,000 days of the lives of children to reduce the risk of acute malnutrition from occurring in the first place.”

The rate of acute malnutrition among children under five has reached critical levels in the conflict-affected areas of Timbuktu and Gao, while the national rate also remains very high.

Behind these figures are the lives of the most vulnerable and forgotten girls and boys in Mali

The report finds acute malnutrition of children in Timbuktu has risen to 15.7 per cent and in Gao to 15.2 per cent, a worrying rise from “serious” to “critical” level on the World Health Organisation’s classification scale. Serious levels of acute malnutrition were also recorded in the regions of Kayes, at 14.2 per cent, and in Taoudéni, at 14.3 per cent, while the national rate is 10.7 per cent.

Children who suffer from the severe form of acute malnutrition have grave muscle wasting, very low weight for their height, and are nine times more likely to die in case of disease due to a weakened immune system.

Since the 2012 political and security crisis in Mali, violence and instability have led to displacements of population and disruption of social services in the north of the country, with detrimental impact on the nutritional status of the most vulnerable girls and boys. Other factors, such

as limited access to water and sanitation in northern areas and childhood diseases like diarrhea, acute respiratory infections and malaria, have aggravated the situation.

Investing in the first 1,000 days of a child, through promotion of practices, such as exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and handwashing with clean water and soap, can effectively prevent malnutrition.

[UN chief lauds Dominica's vision to become first climate-resilient nation after recent devastation](#)

8 October 2017 – United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres visited Dominica on Sunday, taking stock of the immense damage caused by Hurricane Maria last month and the relief efforts underway, as well as paying tribute to its leaders for their vision to not only rebuild but to become the world's first climate-resilient nation.

The category-5 storm made landfall on 18 September, thrashing the country with extreme winds and rain. It left people without electricity and water, destroyed homes and health clinics and isolated communities on the mountainous island. The UN and its partners recently launched an appeal for \$31.1 million to reach over 90 per cent of Dominicans – some 65,000 people – in the next three months.

“I have never seen anywhere else in the world a forest completely decimated without one single leaf on any tree,” said Mr. Guterres, who flew by helicopter over some of the most affected areas. “In every community, most of the buildings are destroyed or heavily damaged.”

Speaking at a joint press conference with Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrett in the capital, Roseau, Mr. Guterres echoed concerns similar to those expressed yesterday during a visit to Antigua and Barbuda, where he witnessed the destruction caused by Hurricane Irma and met with displaced persons.



Secretary-General António Guterres tours Dominica in the aftermath of the devastation left behind by Hurricane Maria. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

“One is to make sure the international community fully recognizes that the intensity of hurricanes and multiplication of hurricanes in the Caribbean in this season is not an accident. It is the result of climate change.”

Citing research by the UN World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the

Secretary-General said that natural disasters had tripled, while the economic damage caused by them has increased five-fold.

“Today, there is scientific proof that climate change is largely responsible for the dramatic increase in the intensity and devastation caused by the hurricanes in the Caribbean and by many other phenomena around the world.”

There is scientific proof that climate change is largely responsible for the dramatic increase in the intensity and devastation caused by the hurricanes in the Caribbean Secretary-General Guterres

In addition to seeing the destruction by air, Mr. Guterres, accompanied by the Prime Minister, visited Salybia in the Kalinago territory, where they met with local authorities and members of the community during a distribution of relief aid.

“We thank you for bearing witness today, bearing witness to the future of all humanity if we do not respond to climate change,” stated Prime Minister Skerrit, who just two weeks ago told the UN General Assembly in New York that he had come straight from “the front line of the war on climate change.”



Aerial view of the devastation in Dominica following successive category five hurricanes in September 2017. UN Photo/Rick Bajornas

“We thank you for taking the time to walk with us on this battlefield of shattered lives,” he added at today’s press conference.

“Our devastation is so complete that our recovery has to be total,” Mr. Skerrit said. “And so we have a unique opportunity to be an example to the world, an example of how an entire nation rebounds from disaster and how an entire nation can be climate resilient for the future.”

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Prime Minister Skerrit of Dominica

“We did not choose this opportunity. We did not wish it. Having had it thrust upon us, we have chosen actively and decisively to be that example to the world.”

He added that the UN has an important role in guiding Dominica on its journey to become the world’s first climate-resistant nation, with good analysis on how to achieve and monitor national climate resilience.

Together, the Secretary-General and the Prime Minister also met with UN staff and non-governmental partners, who have set up a coordination centre at a local hotel that suffered heavy damage during the hurricane.

Noting the difficult circumstances under which they are working, Mr. Guterres expressed his appreciation to the staff, adding: "I'm very proud to be your colleague in these circumstances."

[UN chief urges global solidarity, accelerated climate action after visit to hurricane-stricken Barbuda](#)

7 October 2017 – Having seen first-hand the destruction wrought by the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres on Saturday called for the full mobilization of the international community to support the people of the affected areas, while stressing the need to accelerate climate action.

"I have just witnessed a [level of devastation](#) that I have never seen in my life," Mr. Guterres told a press conference following a visit to storm-battered Barbuda.

"I have been in areas torn by conflict. In my own country, I have seen earthquakes, I've seen storms [...] I have never seen such a high-level of devastation like the one that I witnessed in Barbuda," he stated.

"This must make us think seriously," added Mr. Guterres, who arrived today for a two-day visit to Antigua, Barbuda and Dominica to survey the damage and to assess what more the UN can do to help people recover from the [back-to-back, category 5 hurricanes](#) that struck the region recently.

The Secretary-General cited "a clear link" between the level of greenhouse gas in the atmosphere, including CO₂, the temperature of the water and the intensity of the rainstorms and of the different hurricanes in the region and in other parts of the world.

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Hurricane Irma, which struck the region in early September, had winds of 300 km per hour for 37 hours – the longest such period ever recorded.

"So the link between climate change and the devastation we are witnessing is clear, and there is a collective responsibility of the international community to stop this suicidal development," stated Mr. Guterres.

"And for that, it is essential that the [Paris Agreement](#) on climate

change is fully endorsed and respected but also to recognize that the commitments made in Paris are not enough,” he said.

Mr. Guterres also stressed the need to mobilize resources, including through innovative financial mechanisms, so that people can rebuild their lives, noting that middle-income countries such as Antigua and Barbuda cannot do it alone.

“This is an obligation of the international community, because they are suffering the effects of climate change but they have not contributed to it.”

In Barbuda, the Secretary-General walked through Codrington town and met with some of the returnees. The island's 1,600 residents were evacuated to Antigua before Hurricane Irma struck last month. In Antigua, many of the displaced are staying in shelters, while others with family and friends. Some residents have been traveling back to Barbuda to check on their homes and lands.

Since the disasters struck, the UN and partners have delivered relief by both air and the sea, reaching thousands across the region with food, water purification tablets, water storage tanks, tents, school kits, mosquito nets and cash assistance. They also launched a \$113.9 million appeal to cover humanitarian needs for the immediate period ahead. The UN family is also supporting those staying in the shelters.

Mr. Guterres had a chance to meet with some of the displaced during a visit to the National Technical Training Center in Antigua, which is currently sheltering 112 people, and even got a lesson from some of the younger residents in 'warri' – a game that was brought over to the region from Africa and is played with 48 seeds on a rectangular board with 12 receptacles or 'houses.'

“The most immediate need they have right now is privacy,” Samantha Burnette, who manages the shelter at the Training Centre, told *UN News*.

“Most of them are complaining that they have been bunking with a lot of people. So they don't have the space they need.”

Most of the residents have made up their mind to stay out the year in Antigua. “Some of them are saying there's nothing in Barbuda to go back to right now,” said Ms. Burnette. “They don't mind going back but after it has been rebuilt. Some of them are willing to go back as it is now. But the majority are here and they don't want to move and go nowhere. If they do go over, it's just for the day and they come back.”

Despite the difficulties they have gone through, the residents have adjusted well to their new situation, Ms. Burnette said. “I really feel they have adjusted themselves well. You can see they are smiling a little more now.”